

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Subject Inspection of Art
REPORT

Saint Columba's College
Stranolar, County Donegal
Roll number: 62861F

Date of inspection: 13 April 2016



AN ROINN | DEPARTMENT OF
OIDEACHAIS | EDUCATION
AGUS SCILEANNA | AND SKILLS

**REPORT
ON
THE QUALITY OF LEARNING AND TEACHING IN ART**

INFORMATION ON THE INSPECTION

Date(s) of inspection	12 and 13 April 2016
Inspection activities undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of relevant documents• Discussion with principal and teachers• Interaction with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Observation of teaching and learning during four class periods• Examination of students' work• Feedback to principal and teachers

MAIN FINDINGS

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good.
- Students demonstrated a good knowledge of material appropriateness for set tasks.
- The quality of oral feedback provided to students was a significant strength in all lessons observed.
- Global questioning was the most dominant questioning strategy used in the majority of lessons observed.
- The art department displays great enthusiasm in its work and is dedicated to promoting Art within the school.
- It was very evident that a strong collegial environment is inherent within the department.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should extend questioning strategies to ensure a better balance between the use of global and directed questioning.
 - The art department should develop strategies to engage students in using the formative feedback provided on their work so as to facilitate them to take better ownership of their learning.
 - In planning, the art department should further outline its expected learning intentions in a differentiated manner, thereby providing greater opportunity to identify specific outcomes for all learners.
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INTRODUCTION

Saint Columba's College operates under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education An Irish Schools' Trust) and has an enrolment of 880 students. The school offers a range of curricular programmes to meet the needs of its students, including the Junior Certificate School Programme (JCSP), Transition Year (TY) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP). The study of Art is optional in junior and senior cycle and is compulsory for students in TY.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- The overall quality of teaching and learning was good. In some instances, however, there was scope to enhance planning for differentiation and to integrate additional questioning strategies.
- Clear learning intentions were set and shared with students at the start of all lessons. This practice proved effective in focusing students on the knowledge to be developed. In moving forward, planned lesson intentions should be differentiated to ensure all learners are challenged.
- A highly stimulating and purposeful learning environment was apparent. Students' artwork was exhibited to very good effect in the art rooms, and in permanent and rotating displays in designated areas around the school.
- In all lessons observed, a strong emphasis was placed on Art History through digital presentations and these were used to good effect to explain and reinforce concepts. This discursive approach to Art History facilitated individual student's critical appraisal of artists' work. The benefits of these discussions should be maximised by getting students to record their own notes during these discussions.
- Students demonstrated a good knowledge of material appropriateness for set tasks. The content and presentation of some written work, practical work in notebooks and larger art pieces showed purposeful, ongoing learning.
- The quality of oral feedback provided to students was a significant strength in all lessons observed. In some instances, evidence of written formative feedback was seen on practical work. It is recommended that the use of written feedback be broadened in the assessment of practical and theoretical work across all year groups, and that strategies be developed to encourage learners to use the feedback provided.
- Global questioning was the most dominant questioning strategy used in the majority of lessons and this approach was not always the most effective. At times, there were opportunities to use more directed questioning to assess individual student's learning and to support student engagement. It is recommended that teachers extend questioning strategies to ensure a better balance between global and directed questioning to foster students' deeper critical thinking about art work.
- Good differentiated teaching was observed in some instances. Very good practice was observed where the teacher differentiated instructions using visual demonstrations on a one-to-one basis with students. Teachers of Art should share and develop pedagogical approaches for differentiation across all years.
- A series of good self-reflection sheets is used by the art department. To expand this good practice, more explicit questions need to be posed that encourage students to demonstrate a deep understanding and analysis of their own work.

- A good emphasis on literacy skills was observed in lessons. In the main, students demonstrated confidence in using appropriate subject language; for example, when discussing the work of Savile Lumley and their understanding of poster design. Further opportunities to develop structured oral work should be integrated into lessons.
- There was a very good integration of relevant mathematical concepts in the majority of lessons observed. In one lesson, for example, numeracy skills were integrated into lesson content focusing on measuring for calligraphy.

SUBJECT PROVISION AND WHOLE SCHOOL SUPPORT

- The quality of subject provision and whole-school support for Art is very good. Systems are in place to support the uptake of Art and option bands are constructed based on student choice.
- Health and safety procedures were very well established for the lessons observed. A health and safety document has been developed for inclusion in the subject plan and this is reviewed annually. It is recommended that the art department, in collaboration with senior management, carry out a health and safety risk assessment with particular reference to the kiln, its ventilation and position in the art room. An action plan should be devised to address the identified concerns, as resources permit.
- Students' achievements are celebrated with two specially-designated Art awards presented at the end of year.
- The art department displays great enthusiasm in its work and is dedicated to promoting Art within the school. It is noteworthy that links have been developed to incorporate the visual arts into a variety of community projects such as the '*1916 Sackville Place*'.
- A very good focus is given to supporting teachers' continuing professional development (CPD).

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

- The quality of planning and preparation to support the teaching and learning of Art is very good. The art rooms, classroom resources, visual aids, the storage of artwork, and presentation of class materials were all well organised.
- Good records of students' progress are maintained. As a development to this practice, the art department now needs to develop strategies to engage students in setting individual targets. This will encourage students to plan individual learning goals and encourage them to take more ownership of their learning.
- It was very evident that a strong collegial environment is inherent within the department. Art teachers meet informally on a weekly basis and formal planning meetings occur during the year. Discussions with the department and a review of documentation indicate a very good level of shared planning and co-operation amongst the teachers of Art.
- The department conducts an analysis of student attainment each year and has identified targets for improvement. Examples of such targets are to develop capacity in lino-printing and life-drawing. This good practice should continue to influence planning for the teaching and learning of Art.

- Schemes of work of have been developed which outline long-term and short-term outcomes for all year groups. It is recommended that the department now incorporates differentiated learning intentions into schemes of work to cater for all learners.
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The draft findings and recommendations arising out of this evaluation were discussed with the principal, deputy principal and art department at the conclusion of the evaluation. The board of management was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and recommendations of the report; a response was not received from the board.